

Serial No. 10/784,289

Attorney Docket No. 26A-015

RECEIVED
CENTRAL FAX CENTER

AUG 24 2006

REMARKS

The applicants appreciate the acknowledgement of the claim for priority under section 119 and the notice that the certified copy of the priority document has been received.

Also, the applicants acknowledge receipt of an initialed copy of the form PTO-1449 filed on 24 February 2004.

Claims 1-3, 5, 7-8, 10-13, and 15-20 are pending. Claims 4, 6, 9 and 14 have been canceled. The applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

The drawings were objected to as not showing certain features recited in claim 13. Claim 13 has been amended. In view of the amendment, it is respectfully requested that the objection be withdrawn.

On page 7 of the office action, dependent claims 6-10 and 15-19 were objected to, but indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claim 1 as amended is rewritten claim 9, and incorporates claims 1, 2 and 9. Claim 2 as amended is rewritten claim 6 and incorporates claims 1, 2, 4 and 6. Claim 15 has been re-written in independent form and includes claims 1, 14 and 15. It is respectfully submitted that claims 1, 2 and 15 as rewritten are allowable. Claims 4, 6, 9 and 14 were canceled. Claims dependent from claims 4 or 6 have been amended to depend from allowable claim 2; and claims dependent from claim 9 have been amended to depend from allowable claim 1. In view of the above, the applicant submits that the claims are patentable.

The applicants have rewritten the claims in independent form since the office action indicated that claims 6-10 and 15-19 would be allowable if so re-written. However, the applicants do not concede that other features in the claims are found in the prior art.

Serial No. 10/784,289

Attorney Docket No. 26A-015

The applicants wish to clarify for the record, if necessary, that the claims have been amended to expedite prosecution. Moreover, the applicants reserve the right to pursue the original subject matter in a continuation application.

Any narrowing amendment to the claims in the present Amendment is not to be construed as a surrender of any subject matter between the original claims and the present claims; rather this is merely an attempt at providing one or more definitions of what the applicants believe to be suitable patent protection. In addition, the present claims provide the intended scope of protection that the applicants are seeking for this application. Therefore, no estoppel should be presumed, and the applicants' claims are intended to include a scope of protection under the Doctrine of Equivalents.

For all the reasons advanced above, the applicants respectfully submit that the claims as amended are allowable.

Claims 1-3, 11-12, 14 and 20 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Pub. No. 2002/0043786, Schultz. Claims 1, 2, 4 and 5 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,692,770, Scharboneau et al. ("Scharboneau"). Claim 13 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,244,230, Komiya et al. ("Komiya") in view of Scharboneau. It is respectfully submitted that the rejections are moot because the claims as rewritten are allowable.


In view of the foregoing, the applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. A timely notice to that effect is respectfully requested. If questions relating to patentability remain, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone.

Serial No. 10/784,289

Attorney Docket No. 26A-015

If there are any problems with the payment of fees, please charge any underpayments and credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-1147.

Respectfully submitted,


Cynthia K. Nicholson
Reg. No. 36,880

Posz Law Group, PLC
12040 South Lakes Drive, Suite 101
Reston, VA 20191
Phone 703-707-9110
Fax 703-707-9112
Customer No. 23400